

The ancient work I chose to analyze for this assignment is the *The Lindisfarne Gospels*. According to the narration, this bible is the first “ latin text to be translated word by word into English Gloss...in the mid 10<sup>th</sup> century using small text between the original lines. I am delighted to have to opportunity to view this and other ancient texts via the online tool that simulates turning the real pages. It is a fabulous way to experience these priceless works without damaging them and a wonderful gift to the peoples of the world. As a narrow my comments to this single manuscript, I must add that I was struck by eloquent use of contrasting colors, geometric patterns in the and silver and black bejeweled borders over rich red inset leather. If I was an archaeologist digging through the rubble of an old room, seeing this cover, even under layers of dust would demand that I open it to see what content was so important that it was bound with not only fine richly colored leather, but also with precious metals and jewels. The contents do not disappoint. The ancient velum paper has stood the ravages of time and even now, darkened with age and water stains, acts as the perfect contrasting medium for the richly colored and elaborate geometric graphics and cherished gospel stories. Please see below the cover and selected sample pages of this ancient manuscript, The Lindisfarne Gospels.



Below are the opening pages of the manuscript. There are examples of every design element just on these two pages. According to the narrator, the left page is one of five decorative pages in the book referred to as a “cross carpet page” because the central graphic on the page resembles a large cross. As one studies the incredible pen work that created the repeating geometric designs within each block, one sees the contrasting blocks of red and gold are repeated to form the repeated larger shapes of squares and rectangles, that bound the cross pattern. Upon closer inspection, one sees that the outer border of the page is not a solid color, but rather ribbons of contrasting colors painted between repeated black lines that form intricate geometric patterns. The four corners are no less

embellished with ornate corners of repeating geometric patterns and contrasting colors. It is amazing that this work could be done by hand so cleanly; there are no smears. The facing page is a study of elaborately created scrolls of repeating geometric patterns and rich, but contrasting colors. Space between the letters are filled in with colorful contrasting colors and just above the original Latin text, one can see the neatly printed English Gloss translations mentioned by the narrator. In order for readers through the ages to understand the translations, it is critical they be located very close to the Latin word(s) they replace. Great care was taken to align the text on this first page so that it did not go outside the boundaries established by the graphic on the upper left corner or the line down the right margin. The top and bottom of each letter are carefully aligned horizontally across the page and evenly vertically spaced on the page. The actual text appears to be justified within the constraints established by the margin on the right and the graphics on the left.



In my opinion, the artists utilized the eloquent cover to convey the importance of the book's contents. They meticulously created unique and beautifully inked pages of rich and flowing colors and geometric designs to emphasize the importance of the gospels. Colored inks were very expensive and very hard to utilize without smearing. Their liberal use throughout the manuscript is an indicator of the importance of the information contained within. Letter sizes were used to convey importance as exemplified on page 2 above. According to the narrator, it says Novum, or New as in new testament. The other sets of pages that establish a new gospel also demonstrate these techniques. Also, as mentioned above, word for word translations of the Latin to English were provided in small neat script that attempted to discreetly convey the gospels in English. These translations were just above the original text as shown on page 2.

The Lindisfame Bible British Library Manuscripts, retrieved from: [http://ttdownload.bl.uk/app\\_files/xbap/Browser.App.xbap?id=4145201d-ee22-4382-9ae8-2c78d9138444-Windows](http://ttdownload.bl.uk/app_files/xbap/Browser.App.xbap?id=4145201d-ee22-4382-9ae8-2c78d9138444-Windows) Internet Explorer, Jan.23, 2012, pp ( 1-2).